

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Eight Kankakee Men Charged with Armed Robbery Conspiracy, Armed Bank Robbery and Carrying a Firearm During a Crime of Violence**

### ***Financial Institutions, Businesses in Kankakee, Peotone and Rantoul Targeted***

Kankakee, IL - A federal grand jury returned a ten-count indictment today charging eight Kankakee, Illinois men with conspiring to commit at least five armed robberies of financial institutions and businesses in Kankakee, Peotone and Rantoul, Illinois, since November 2005, as announced by Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. In announcing the indictment in Kankakee, Mr. Heaton was joined by local, state and federal law enforcement agency representatives who participated in the ongoing task force investigation.

The indictment alleges the eight men conspired together and with others to commit at least five armed robberies resulting in more than \$400,000 stolen from the financial institutions and businesses. Those charged include: Brad O. Williams, age 27; Seville Williams, 23; Clinton Williams, 23; Tyron Thomas, 20; Rory Tucker, 20; Marion Jefferson III, 19; Bobby L. Riley, 19; and, Ahshun T. Collins, 26, all of Kankakee, Illinois. All eight defendants are charged with conspiracy to commit robbery and armed bank robbery; armed bank robbery; and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. Three defendants, Brad Williams, Thomas and Collins, are also charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence of 25 years imprisonment for each offense of armed bank robbery and a mandatory, consecutive minimum seven years in prison for the first conviction for carrying a firearm during a crime of violence. Convictions for each additional offense of carrying a firearm during a crime of violence carry a statutory mandatory 25 years in prison to be served consecutive to any other term of imprisonment imposed. The indictment also includes charges involving interference with interstate commerce by threats or violence. Known as the Hobbs Act, the maximum statutory penalty for the offense is 20 years in prison. For possession of a firearm by a felon, the penalty is up to 10 years in prison.

U.S. Attorney Heaton stated, "If convicted of these violent crimes, these young men face serious and significant prison terms. This effort demonstrates the effectiveness of federal, state and local law enforcement coming together, through the Project Safe Neighborhoods program, to take violent gun crime offenders off the streets for as long as possible and to make it clear that violent crime exacts swift and severe consequences."

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The indictment alleges the conspiracy began in or about November 2005 and continued to April 24, 2006, and included the following armed robberies:

January 3, 2006 - Two men were allegedly armed with handguns and stole approximately \$2,700 from a Kankakee Walgreen's store. The indictment alleges the defendants caused a fictitious 911 call to Kankakee authorities concerning a home invasion on the opposite side of town;

January 11, 2006 - approximately \$313,000 was allegedly stolen from the Commonwealth Credit Union in Kankakee by Brad and Seville Williams, who entered the credit union, armed with handguns and threatened employees. Clinton Williams allegedly drove Brad and Seville Williams from the credit union;

March 28, 2006 - Brad Williams allegedly acted as a lookout while Thomas and Jefferson, one of whom was armed with a handgun, entered Heights Finance in Kankakee, threatened employees and demanded money. One of the defendants allegedly struck an employee in the head with the gun, causing the gun to discharge. Approximately \$200 was taken in the robbery;

April 7, 2006 - Brad Williams, Thomas, Clinton Williams and at least one other co-conspirator entered the First Community Bank and Trust in Peotone, Illinois, and stole approximately \$100,000. The indictment alleges at least two of the defendants were armed with handguns; and,

April 24, 2006 - armed robbery of Community Plus Federal Credit Union in Rantoul, Illinois. Brad Williams, Thomas, Jefferson, and Collins, at least three of whom were armed with handguns, allegedly entered the credit union and stole approximately \$3,600. During the robbery, two employees were struck in the head by handguns. Clinton Williams, Tucker, and Riley allegedly acted as getaway drivers and lookouts during the robbery.

Brad Williams, Clinton Williams, Thomas, Tucker, Riley and Collins were previously arrested and charged by criminal complaint with the April 24, 2006, robbery of the Community Plus Federal Credit Union. All were ordered detained pending trial. Seville Williams was previously indicted and ordered detained pending trial on charges related to the robbery of the Commonwealth Credit Union on January 11, 2006. Following today's indictment, a federal arrest warrant has been issued for Jefferson, currently in Illinois state custody.

Law enforcement agency representatives participating in the task force include: Michael P. Kinkade, Kankakee Police Chief; Edward D. Smith, State's Attorney, Kankakee County; Paul Farber, Rantoul Police Chief; Peter A. Pappas, Resident Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Terry Scott, Supervisory Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Timothy A. Bass, Supervisory Assistant U.S. Attorney; Tim Bukowski, Kankakee County Sheriff; Captain Carl Dobrich, Illinois State Police; Don Kuffner, Bradley Police Chief; Joe Beard, Bourbonnais Police Chief; Scott Fitz, Grant Park Police Chief; Bill Miller, Herscher Police Chief; Marv Rathert, Acting Peotone Police Chief; and, Bernie Thompson, Manteno Police Chief.

U.S. Attorney Heaton said, "This task force, with the assistance of the surrounding law enforcement agencies and the community, has been tireless and tenacious in its efforts to solve these violent crimes."

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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